

1. INDIAN CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

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Answer the following questions

1. What do you know about Gandhiji?

The name of Gandhiji needs no introduction. He is popularly known as Bapu or the 'Father of the Nation'. He is known for his unparalleled contribution in the Indian freedom struggle. His politics were centered on day to day problems of common people. He was an ardent advocate of 'truth and non-violence'. His Autobiography My Experiment with Truth is a truthful record of an honest soul.

2. What did Gandhi do for the farmers in Bihar?

Gandhiji came to Champaran in 1917. Here the farmers were forced to yield indigo on the 15% of the land and had to submit the entire indigo crop as rent. Gandhi Ji went there to fight for the poor farmers. But the administration ordered him to leave Champaran. He disobeyed the order and as a result he was asked to appear in the court. Gandhi Ji appeared in the court but the farmers surrounded the court and demonstrated fearlessly. The officials failed to control the crowd. Gandhi Ji was not sentenced. The government conducted an inquiry into the case. Gandhi ji presented the evidence of exploitation of the farmers. The decision was in the favour of the farmers. This was the first triumph of the Civil Disobedience in modern India.

3. What do you understand by Indian civilization and culture?

Indian civilization is an ancient civilization. It has witnessed the fall off the Roman, Greek, Egyptian civilizations. It has also witnessed other civilizations losing their true character. Indian civilization puts emphasis on the mode of conduct which shows the path of duty. Performance of duty inculcates moral values in us. Indian civilization also teaches to

control one's wants and not to multiply it. Culture is a varied term. It represents the arts, customs, lifestyles, backgrounds and habits that characterize a particular society or nation. Indian lifestyle reflects simplicity. It teaches the lesson high simple living and high thinking. Therefore a true Indian must have control over his physical needs so that there can be nothing to hinder him in the service of humanity.

4. What do our holy scriptures tell us about universal human values?

Our holy scriptures tell us the real meaning of life. They teach us to elevate our character. This is why our ancestors did not develop on material line and invented machinery; they developed on spiritual line and made wonderful discoveries in religion and spiritualism. Our scriptures tell us to respect the higher values of life like love, truth, honesty, humbleness, religion etc.

5. How is Indian civilization different from European Civilization?

Indian civilization is different from European civilization on many grounds. Indian civilization is based on the higher values of life. It promotes spiritualism and belief on God. Contrary to this the European civilization is based on the materialism. It tends to satisfy man's physical needs which lead to formation of a godless society.

6. Why does Gandhi say that 'mind is a restless bird'? What makes the mind restless?

Gandhi Ji calls mind a restless bird because the more it gets the more it wants and still remains dissatisfied. A man is born with a plethora of desires. He works throughout his life to fulfill his desires. But desires are never-ending. Therefore the mind remains restless all the time.

7. Why did our ancestors dissuade us from luxuries and pleasures? Did they do the right thing?

Our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures because they knew that physical needs always remain insatiable. There is no use of

running after our luxuries and physical pleasures. Our ancestors did the right thing because they rightly believed that if they ran after such things they would barter away the permanent good for a momentary pleasure.

8. Why, according to Gandhi, have we stuck with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago? Should we do the same thing even today?

Our ancestors have stuck with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of years ago because they knew the ill-effects of the modern discoveries that make the life luxurious. Man has become a slave to these machines. They kept themselves away from life-corroding competition. Today India has developed a lot. We have started to use the modern machines in every field of our daily life. But we must know where to stop. It will be perilous for us to try to emulate the European life-pattern.

9. How did our ancestors view large cities? Why were they satisfied with small villages?

Our ancestors were of the opinion that large cities were a snare and a useless encumbrance. They believed that people would not be happy there. There would be gangs of robbers and thieves and the rich would rob the poor. Village life is simple and honest in comparison to city life. There people are not as selfish and self-centered as those in big cities. This is why our ancestors were satisfied with small villages.

10. How did our ancestors enjoy true 'Home Rule'?

During those days our ancestors enjoyed true Home Rule as everyone followed their occupation honestly. There were doctors and lawyers among them but they did not rob people rather they were dependent on them. The common practice was to avoid courts. The common people lived independently and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed the true Home Rule.

11. What according to the author is the modern civilization?

Gandhi ji states that modern civilization is the worship of the brute in us. It leads us away from spiritual and divine life. It is the devotion to a brazen materialism. He also believes that if we follow it, it will bring nothing disaster and destruction for us.

12. What did the author convey to the countrymen about dealing with modern civilization?

The author is of the opinion that we the Indians should stay away from the western civilization at all cost. India is a place known for its spiritual values. It is therefore not proper for us to follow a civilization based on materialism.

13. What is the distinguished characteristic of modern civilization?

Modern civilization is based on materialism which thrives on the multiplication of human wants. The worshippers of modern civilization lack in having faith in the divine power. The society based on this model is a godless society.

14. The author perceived danger for modern inventions. How?

The modern inventions make our life comfortable. But over dependence on these inventions leads to a life based on luxury. Modern man has become slave to these modern inventions and he can't think about a day of his life without these things. In this way human race is in the risk of bartering away the eternal good for fleeting pleasure.

15. What does the author prefer to materialism?

The author being a devoted lover of Indian civilization and culture prefers spiritualism to materialism. He says that material life is transient while spiritual life leads to divinity and it is permanent.

16. What does our civilization depend upon?

Our civilization depends on self-denial and not on self-indulgence. Human wants are unlimited. It is hazardous to indulge in its fulfillment.

Therefore in order to attain the real happiness, we have to develop contentment.

17. What is civilization in the real sense of term?

According to Gandhi ji civilization in the real sense of term is the observance of morality and preservation of morality. For this, we have to control our unbridled passion. This can be done by controlling our mind. This is the only way to lead a satisfied life.

1. Long answer Questions

‘I believe that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in to be in the world.’ What does Gandhi mean by this statement? Do you subscribe to his view?

Gandhi ji believes that the Indian civilization cannot be beaten in this world because it stands for the higher values of life. Other civilizations either met their doom or they accepted change with the passage of time. But India is sound on the foundations laid by our forefathers. And this is the glory of our civilization. Many thrust their advice on India but our country remains steady. The cause of the glory of our civilization is our adherence to the age old values of our country. While other civilizations have turned into memory and is confined to history, but in our country one can still see the ancient India living. This is because the people in our country have strong religious values. Surely there is something in Indian civilization that has kept it still alive. Here I strongly agree with the writer. He is right in his observance that the civilization India has evolved is not to be beaten in to be in the world. We notice that mind is a restless bird, the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. Pick out other metaphors used in this lesson. How do these metaphors help Gandhi ji in persuading the readers?

Gandhi ji has used many metaphors in his illuminating essay Indian Civilization and Culture. Apart from calling mind a 'restless bird', he has used many other metaphors profound in meaning. He has used the 'Golden Fleece' to express the idea of a something which is difficult to achieve. He has taken it from Greek mythology. It shows the Gandhi Ji's wide range of reading as well as his mastery over English Language. Another metaphor he has used in the essay is 'sheet anchor' which means security here. In this way we see that Gandhi ji has used metaphors meticulously in order to express his thoughts in a clear and lucid way.

A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich or unhappy because he poor. The rich are often seen to be unhappy the poor to be happy. What according to Gandhi defines happiness?

The author is of the opinion that being rich is not a condition to be happy or being poor to be unhappy. The real happiness lies in contentment. The rich no stone unturned in order to fulfill all their desires. But Gandhi ji believes that our desires become more unbridled when we try to satisfy them. Thus despite their best efforts they can't satisfy their desires, they fail to achieve it. This leaves them sad. On the other hand, the poor lead a content life and do not multiply their wants. A man can be content by only by controlling his mind. In this way we see that happiness is in the real sense a state of mind.

Why our ancestors feel satisfied with small villages? Did they do the right thing? Will it be wise today to follow our ancestors in this connection? Give your own view.

Gandhi ji writes that our ancestors were quite content to live in villages and considered towns a place where the poor were robbed by the rich. They were of the opinion that town is a place where vices have many faces. The ancient Indian civilization advocates for the village life as it becomes the epitome for "simple living and high thinking." In this way Gandhi ji reminds us of the dangers human race is facing today with the spread of urbanization. Life

becomes of slave to luxuries and spiritualism is left far behind. The writer rightly observes that the greatest benefit of village life is that it preserves the Indian civilization and culture in the truest sense. Our ancestors were justly satisfied with life in small villages.

Discuss the negative features of the western civilization.

Western civilization stands for material life. Western countries have developed on the material line that leads to a life of luxury. It believes in the multiplication of wants which results on del-indulgence. They have tried their best to fulfill their worldly derides. But in doing so, they developed a distance from the religion and god. The west has become has godless society. Such a distance for these higher values of life leads to immorality. The writer seems to be quite content that our country has not progress on material line. He is rather happy that it has progressed on spiritual line because when the world will become a wasteland devoid of religion and god, India will look like an oasis and will be ready to lead the world.

What is the essential difference between Indian civilization and western civilization? How is our civilization superior to the western civilization?

The chief difference between Indian civilization and western civilization is that the former stands for spiritualism while the latter stands for materialism. Indian civilization advocates for self-denial and not self-indulgence which is an essential part of the western civilization. The writer admits that he does not dislike the west. Rather he is grateful to it for many things he has learnt from it. He also accepts that the inventions made by them are dazzling in many ways. But he also holds that his experience says that for the Indians, it would be fatal to imitate the western culture and civilization because it leads to develop a distance from religion and god. The west has become has turned into a godless society. Such a distance for these higher values of life leads to immorality. The

writer also claims that Indian civilization is far superior to the western civilization. The material life offered by the western civilization is transient while spiritual life offered by the Indian civilization leads to divinity and hence it is permanent.

A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary but above a certain level it becomes a hindrance instead of help. Elaborate.

Gandhi Ji is of the opinion that comfort and luxury is good to a certain level. But if we dependent too much on modern inventions that add luxury in our life, they will certainly make us their slaves. Our ancestors dissuaded from indulging in luxury. The more we indulge in them, the more unbridle they become. Our want for luxurious things keep on multiplying. This multiplication of our unsatisfied desires is a trap which dupes us in false pursuits. We spend too much time in these things and find little time for the service of humanity. In this way the best way to lead a satisfied life is to curb our desires.